

AD-A215 776

2

**THE LIGHT INFANTRY DIVISION:
NO TOOL FOR THE TACTICAL COMMANDER**

A Monograph

by

Major Charles A. Peddy

Infantry

DTIC
ELECTF
DEC 19 1989
S B D
CL



School of Advanced Military Studies
United States Army Command and General Staff College
Fort Leavenworth, Kansas

Second Term 88-89

Approved for Public Release; Distribution is Unlimited

REPORT DOCUMENTATION PAGE				Form Approved OMB No. 0704-0188		
1a. REPORT SECURITY CLASSIFICATION <u>unclassified</u>			1b. RESTRICTIVE MARKINGS			
2a. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION AUTHORITY			3. DISTRIBUTION / AVAILABILITY OF REPORT Approved for public release; distribution unlimited			
2b. DECLASSIFICATION / DOWNGRADING SCHEDULE						
4. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER(S)			5. MONITORING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER(S)			
6a. NAME OF PERFORMING ORGANIZATION School of Advanced Military Studies, USACGSC		6b. OFFICE SYMBOL (if applicable) ATZI-SWV	7a. NAME OF MONITORING ORGANIZATION			
6c. ADDRESS (City, State, and ZIP Code) Fort Leavenworth, Kansas 66027-6900			7b. ADDRESS (City, State, and ZIP Code)			
8a. NAME OF FUNDING / SPONSORING ORGANIZATION		8b. OFFICE SYMBOL (if applicable)	9. PROCUREMENT INSTRUMENT IDENTIFICATION NUMBER			
8c. ADDRESS (City, State, and ZIP Code)			10. SOURCE OF FUNDING NUMBERS			
			PROGRAM ELEMENT NO.	PROJECT NO.	TASK NO.	WORK UNIT ACCESSION NO.
11. TITLE (Include Security Classification) The Light Infantry Division-No Tool For The Tactical Commander (U)						
12. PERSONAL AUTHOR(S) Major Charles A Peddy, USA						
13a. TYPE OF REPORT Monograph		13b. TIME COVERED FROM _____ TO _____		14. DATE OF REPORT (Year, Month, Day) 89/05/19 89/02/25		
15. PAGE COUNT 47						
16. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTATION						
17. COSATI CODES			18. SUBJECT TERMS (Continue on reverse if necessary and identify by block number)			
FIELD	GROUP	SUB-GROUP	Light Infantry Division Heavy-Light Employment			
			Employing Light Infantry In NATO			
19. ABSTRACT (Continue on reverse if necessary and identify by block number)						
<p>The light infantry division has been a source of considerable conflict within Army circles since its inception in 1984. At the heart of the matter is the ideological difference between the U.S. and European concepts of what makes an infantry unit, "light". This difference is crucial because it determines the doctrinal employment of that force. The US Army's definition treats light infantry divisions as regular infantry only with less equipment. In a mid to high intensity scenario they would be augmented and assigned missions closely resembling those given to the mechanized infantry. The European definition treats light infantry more as a separate arm, to be employed in a manner which complements, rather than supports, the mechanized forces.</p> <p>The Duke of Wellington and Field Marshal Sir William Slim are two historical examples, spanning the era of light infantry, who illustrate how theater commanders, employing their light and heavy forces in a complementary manner, can defeat a numerically superior</p> <p style="text-align: center;">(continued on other side of form)</p>						
20. DISTRIBUTION / AVAILABILITY OF ABSTRACT <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> UNCLASSIFIED/UNLIMITED <input type="checkbox"/> SAME AS RPT <input type="checkbox"/> DTIC USERS			21. ABSTRACT SECURITY CLASSIFICATION <u>unclassified</u>			
22a. NAME OF RESPONSIBLE INDIVIDUAL Major Charles Peddy			22b. TELEPHONE (Include Area Code) (913) 684-3345		22c. OFFICE SYMBOL ATLZ-SWV	

continued from other side.

force.

The pitfalls of employing light forces according to US doctrine are identified, illustrating that the tactical commander is not as capable as the operational commander of employing light forces, because he lacks the necessary perspective, assets, and the time to employ them properly.

THE LIGHT INFANTRY DIVISION: NO TOOL FOR THE TACTICAL COMMANDER

MAJOR CHARLES PEDDY

INFANTRY

School of Advanced Military Studies
U.S. Army Command and General Staff College
Fort Leavenworth, Kansas

25 May 1989

Approved for public release; distribution is unlimited

SCHOOL OF ADVANCED MILITARY STUDIES

MONOGRAPH APPROVAL

Name of Student: Charles A. Peddy, MAJ, Infantry

Title of Monograph: The Light Infantry Division: No Tool for the
Tactical Commander

Approved by:



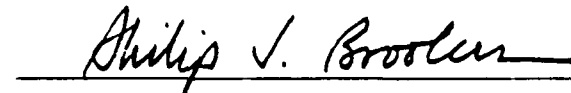
LTC David G. O'Connor, MBA

Monograph Director



COL L. D. Holder, MA

Director, School of
Advanced Military
Studies



Philip J. Brookes, Ph.D.

Director, Graduate
Degree Program

Accepted this 15th day of May 1989

ABSTRACT

THE LIGHT INFANTRY DIVISION- NO TOOL FOR THE TACTICAL COMMANDER. by
Major Charles A. Peddy, USA, 47 pages.

The light infantry division has been a source of considerable conflict within Army circles since its inception in 1984. At the heart of the matter is the ideological difference between the U.S. and European concepts of what makes an infantry unit, "light". This difference is crucial because it determines the doctrinal employment of that force. The US Army's definition treats light infantry divisions as regular infantry only with less equipment. In a mid to high intensity scenario they would be augmented and assigned missions closely resembling those given to the mechanized infantry. The European definition treats light infantry more as a separate arm, to be employed in a manner which complements, rather than supports, the mechanized forces.

The Duke of Wellington and Field Marshal Sir William Slim are two historical examples, spanning the era of light infantry, who illustrate how theater commanders, employing their light and heavy forces in a complementary manner, can defeat a numerically superior force.

The pitfalls of employing light forces according to US doctrine are identified, illustrating that the tactical commander is not as capable as the operational commander of employing light forces, because he lacks the necessary perspective, assets, and time to employ them properly.

Accession For	
NTIS GRA&I	<input checked="checked" type="checkbox"/>
DTIC TAB	<input type="checkbox"/>
Unannounced	<input type="checkbox"/>
Justification	
By	
Distribution/	
Availability Codes	
Dist	Avail and/or Special
A-1	

TABLE OF CONTENTS

SECTION I	INTRODUCTION	<u>PAGE</u> 1
SECTION II	THE EUROPEAN CONCEPT OF LIGHT INFANTRY EMPLOYMENT	4
SECTION III	US CONCEPT FOR EMPLOYMENT OF LIGHT INFANTRY	8
SECTION IV	PITFALLS IN THE US LIGHT INFANTRY EMPLOYMENT CONCEPT	13
SECTION V	WELLINGTON'S OPERATIONAL USE OF LIGHT INFANTRY	23
SECTION VI	OPERATIONAL USE OF LIGHT AND HEAVY FORCES IN BURMA	29
SECTION VII	ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSION	36
ENDNOTES		41
BIBLIOGRAPHY		45

SECTION I-INTRODUCTION

The employment of light infantry units has been a source of considerable conflict within US army circles since their inception in 1983. Proponents argue that the light units are what the US needs today. They are designed for rapid strategic deployment to third world theaters of operations and, once there, will function well in the manpower demanding-low intensity spectrum of war that will likely dominate our future military involvement.

Critics charge that the wrong criteria determined the final form of the light division. The table of organization and equipment for this unit was based more on the capability to fit on 500 C141 airframes to make the division more rapidly deployable, than for any particular style of fighting. In order to fly out on that number of aircraft the division has an austere support structure and is greatly limited in the size and numbers of vehicles and weapon systems it can deploy. Many critics continue that such a scaled down unit is too vulnerable for the NATO high intensity scenario and must be augmented from corps resources in order to perform as a functional infantry unit.¹

Compounding the problem are the differing conceptual definitions of what really constitutes light infantry, because they largely determine how that force will be employed. The European concept of classic light infantry makes it appear as almost a separate branch of service from heavy, or regular infantry. To be light infantry is almost a state of mind. The light infantryman fights with a different style, uses terrain differently to perform different missions that take advantage of his particular strengths while minimizing his peculiar

weaknesses.² It is how the unit is employed, not the equipment it uses, that determines whether it is light infantry or not.

The US Army's doctrinal view, however, is that light infantry forces are really like regular (heavy) infantry, only with less equipment.³ With proper augmentation to make up for their lack of equipment, US light forces are expected to execute the traditional infantry missions their heavier mechanized brethren are assigned.⁴

This paper will compare the US and European views on employing light infantry forces. It will then cover the potential shortcomings of employing light forces based on the US concept of assigning light forces traditional infantry missions in support of heavy forces as envisioned in NATO.⁴

Two historical examples will show how employing light forces, independently at the operational level, allowed theater commanders to complement their effect on the enemy with that of their conventional forces. Both Wellington in the Peninsular War and Sir William Slim in Burma are good examples because their cases span the short history of modern light forces. They clearly show how an operational commander, envisioning the complementary employment of light and regular forces, under trying circumstances, can defeat a numerically superior enemy. Both were, coincidentally, officers who served in Indian units and had developed innovative means of employing light forces in order to accomplish the mission.

This paper will conclude that employing light forces in a manner which complements the use of regular forces makes the best use of that valuable resource. It requires that the light infantry division operate independently of regular forces and it is only the operational

level commander who can best employ them in that manner. Only at the operational level does the commander have the planning time and resources to insure the proper employment of the light division. The operational commander has the luxury of a certain detachment which allows him the broad view of the battlefield, and the perspective to independently employ his light and heavy forces.

For the purposes of this paper, complementary employment of forces is defined to mean the employment of different forces in such a manner that when the enemy is forced to react to one, he becomes more vulnerable to the effects of the other force. An analogy used by William Lind in his book, Maneuver Warfare Handbook, to illustrate this principle is the use of a minefield and overwatching fires to cover an engagement area. To cross the minefield requires time and the visibility to see and clear the mines. To minimize the danger of overwatching fires while crossing the engagement area requires speed and smoke to obscure the area. Reacting to the mines makes the enemy more vulnerable to the overwatching fires and vice versa.⁵

Many authors describing the European concept of light infantry often interchange the terms "light" and "irregular". I will often do the same, and will, at times, refer to the conventional or heavy forces as "regular" or "main" forces to emphasize the conceptional difference in their employment.

Section II-THE EUROPEAN CONCEPT OF LIGHT INFANTRY EMPLOYMENT

The 1740-48 Austrian War of Succession introduced Europe to the modern era of light infantry. The Austrians raised large numbers of light infantry forces in response to the rigid and mechanical regular infantry tactics of the period. The light forces were not equipped or trained to go head to head against the volley firing line infantry formations, but their ability to disrupt the movements of line infantry was appreciated by the Prussians who emulated the Austrians by raising light units of their own. These units were made up of hunters and woodsmen (Jaegers) who were skilled in the use of the rifle and could be counted on to work independent of the regular formations.¹

The English experience in colonial America 20 years later spurred them to raise and train several light infantry regiments. General Braddock's experience, where his force of regular infantry was soundly defeated by a smaller group of French and Indians using unconventional skirmishing tactics, introduced the British to this new form of warfare. Generals Wolfe and Amherst both solidly endorsed the development of light infantry units that could defeat the French and their Indian allies at their own game. Several light infantry regiments were used in America during the French and Indian War, and then again during our Revolutionary War. At the conclusion of each war, however, the British dropped the concept of light infantry, sometimes keeping the unit designation, but training and equipping those units to fight traditional infantry missions.²

The French revolutionary wars of the late 18th century saw an emphasis on the tactical use of light forces in Europe. The French soldier of the time may have been less trained in the stilted manual of arms and tactical movements of the day, but he was a more motivated and trustworthy soldier than those found in the Austrian and Prussian armies. The French commanders could take advantage of these qualities to form groups of skirmishers. These groups would precede the marching units on to the battlefield and engage the enemy infantry while the regular French forces deployed into battle formation. Their use proved so successful that in 1797, Frederick, Duke of York, ordered the reformation of English light infantry units. Sir John Moore was tasked with raising and training several light infantry regiments to form the Light Division, a unit which Wellington would later use to good effect in Portugal and Spain. In recruiting and training these regiments, Sir John emphasized the need for "intelligent, hardy, active" men who would be trained in tactics which required "independent thinking and action, as well as self discipline".³ At a time when many in the line infantry were recruited through press gangs and were harshly disciplined, Wellington once referred to his soldiers as "...the scum of the earth-the mere scum of the earth..."⁴, recruiting high quality manpower for military units was a radical departure indeed.

The European soldier became a light infantryman not because of the equipment he carried, but by the mission he was given and the manner in which he was expected to carry it out. He operated alone, or in very small, dispersed groups, rather than in the densely packed formations where one could take comfort from the presence of

companions. Instead of marching across the terrain of the battlefield, the light infantryman appreciated each small fold and dip the earth provided him. He depended on these terrain features to offset his disadvantage in firepower, mobility and the protection of numbers.⁵

The modern European concept of light infantry employment has not changed. It is still determined by the mission and the tactics employed rather than the lack of equipment carried. Light infantry "focuses on disrupting, psychologically dislocating and disorganizing the enemy in preparation for a decision"⁶, rather than physically destroying the enemy's forces. The light infantry force fights best when it fights independently of other forces at the tactical level, although its effects on the enemy are coordinated with those forces at the operational level. This differs significantly from the concept of regular, (armored) infantry, which supports other arms such as armor and is, in turn, supported by other arms- all of which are integrated at the tactical level.⁷

Under the European concept light forces can be employed against heavy forces successfully if allowed to operate in the classic light infantry style. Light infantry should operate in the type of terrain which actually allows them to have the mobility advantage over regular armored forces. There is plenty of opportunity to employ light forces in Europe. The Soviets consider only 50% of West Germany to be passable to tanks, with 30% of the land being wooded and over 10% urbanized.⁸

Light forces obviously lack the armor protection and firepower to slug it out with heavy forces. They degrade the heavy force's firepower by operating in small, dispersed units whose low profile decreases the ability of heavy forces to detect them and focus firepower on them.

Because of their vulnerability to enemy firepower, light forces cannot mass to attack enemy forces. Light forces must avoid the enemy's strength and seek his flanks and rear areas for their targets. They must rely on surprise, cunning and deception to violently and rapidly hit the enemy where he is weak, and depart before the enemy can react. Finally, light forces must always be on the offensive. They adapt to the terrain to suit their purposes, they should not attempt to hold it. Defending terrain forces light infantry to become a stationary target and allows the enemy to focus his superior firepower on them and ultimately destroy them.⁹

This section discussed how the classic European approach to employing light infantry is based on the mission to be performed and the tactics to be employed to accomplish that mission. The next section will discuss the US Army's doctrinal approach to light infantry.

SECTION III-US CONCEPT FOR EMPLOYMENT OF LIGHT INFANTRY

If any US Army organization can ever be associated with one individual it is the light infantry division with General John Wickam. As Chief of Staff of the Army, General Wickam pushed hard for the addition of light infantry divisions to the Army structure. Their small size and lack of heavy equipment would allow them to be rapidly deployable to "crisis areas before a conflict begins"¹ The division would make up for its small size and lack of firepower by training and operating along the classic European light infantry concept. The light infantry would be offensively oriented, relying on initiative, stealth and surprise, rather than overwhelming firepower. Even if employed in defensive missions in close or urbanized terrain, their tactics would be offensive, "habitually" conducting ambushes, attacks and counterattacks.²

General Wickam foresaw the employment of light divisions primarily in the low intensity portion of the spectrum of conflict, where they would "seek out and destroy the enemy on his terrain using infiltration, air assault, ambush and raid".³ The light infantry division could also be employed in mid to high intensity scenarios provided it was augmented with tailored corps units to strengthen combat power and sustainability. In such scenarios he envisioned light divisions employed on missions which would release regular (mechanized or armored) forces for decisive employment elsewhere on the battlefield.⁴

General Wickam may have envisioned light infantry divisions in terms of the classic European definition but US Army writings indicate that our doctrine defines the "light" concept along physical rather than conceptual lines. That physical context is an old idea. As far back as World War II, the Army Ground Forces under LTG McNair explored the employment of divisions which were "light" because they had fewer men and equipment than the standard infantry division.⁵ Our modern doctrinal manuals (FC 71-101, Light Infantry Division Operations, and FM 71-100, Division Operations (draft)) have continued with that concept. FM 71-100 illustrates the difference between light and heavy forces in the following manner:

"Light forces are characterized by lighter, predominantly hand held, small arms and crew served weapon systems with personnel using foot mobility as the primary means of closing with and destroying the enemy".⁶

Our doctrine writers do not envision light forces fighting "light" for long, since they have purposely structured those divisions' command and control to readily accept the augmentation that will allow them to fight in the higher end of the spectrum of conflict. Once properly augmented, the light division could fight independently or as part of other forces:

"At the tactical level, the optimum employment option is to employ the light force as a division under Corps control. The Corps commander must ensure that the mission assigned to the light force capitalizes on its unique night fighting capabilities. While the division is employed as an entity, it conducts operations exploiting the advantages of terrain and limited visibility"

FM 71-100 (draft)⁷

The US definition of light infantry as regular infantry with less equipment follows through with the traditional infantry missions that are recommended for light forces. The most popular is the economy of force mission, mentioned both in FM 71-100 and in Colonel Huba Wass de Czege's white paper for General Galvin on the use of light infantry in Europe. The light division, properly augmented of course, would occupy an area within a corps sector that was characterized by restrictive terrain. Using the light division there would then free the regular force which initially had that sector to be employed by the corps commander elsewhere.⁸

Another suggested traditional infantry mission is the strongpoint defense. Augmented light forces would be given a key terrain feature to defend against Soviet forces. The key terrain would either be in restrictive terrain such as mountain passes or forests or in urban areas. The light force there would force Soviet forces to dismount to attack the dug in infantry, thus slowing them down and would allowing mechanized forces to focus on the more maneuverable avenues of approach were they could better use their armor and mobility.⁹

A third possible mission the corps commander could assign his light division is rear area operations. That would allow the corps commander to focus his regular forces on the main battle area where they would provide him a greater benefit.¹⁰ This also can be considered as another form of economy of force role for the light force.

This fourth use of light infantry is almost specious, but is mentioned it here because conscientious military officers, faced with the frustrating problems of fitting light infantry forces into the

mold of the armored infantry they are used to, have suggested it as a means of solving another acknowledged problem. They envision the light infantry divisions as a manpower pool to provide fillers for Bradley units which are chronically short of infantry. They see light infantry soldiers as replacements for Bradley casualties in the early stages of the war before the individual replacement flow from CONUS has begun, and as a means of enhancing the infantry tasks Bradley units may have to perform in support of the armored forces.¹¹

These missions exclusively relate to fighting in Europe. In fact, a criticism directed at our doctrine is the emphasis on employing light forces in the high intensity scenario envisioned in NATO, as if Europe was the most likely place for US military forces to be employed.¹² That criticism may be valid in the sense that our traditional doctrinal use of forces has been based on the World War II mechanized style of warfare, and being most familiar with that concept we attempt to compare new ideas against those parameters.

This section discussed the US concept for the employment of light infantry units. During a recent exercise, a US corps had the opportunity to employ a light division in its sector. Both the commander and his staff were open minded about the use of light infantry and were sincere in their efforts to employ them as best they could. The corps was given control of the light division about 36 hours prior to hostilities with the guidance that it be employed in a manner that would release a comparable heavy force for employment elsewhere. With that guidance and in the short time available, the corps gave them an area to defend in the high ground covering an armor avenue of approach. Two corps engineer battalions were given to the

light division to help them prepare defenses. The armored task force that had been relieved by the light force remained to the rear of the light division to assist when needed. The augmented light division defended the approach for two days. After being severely attrited, its sector was penetrated on the third day.

The late arriving light division's planning cell would have preferred to be inserted as company or battalion sized elements in between the attacking Warsaw Pact echelons. There they would conduct raids and ambushes to degrade the combat effectiveness of the committed echelon and disrupt the orderly transition of the subsequent echelon. Unfortunately, the corps staff was already too far into its decision cycle to consider another course of action in the little time it had left.

Our historical European orientation forces light infantry proponents to justify the existence of light divisions by their ability to fight Soviets in Europe. Our doctrine assigns them the same missions in Europe as the heavy infantry. The next section discusses the problems inherent when we expect tactical commanders to integrate light and heavy forces under this concept.

SECTION IV-PITFALLS IN THE US LIGHT INFANTRY EMPLOYMENT CONCEPT

The preceding section discusses several doctrinal methods of employing light infantry forces in the mid to high intensity NATO scenario, with light division under corps control. However, assigning light infantry forces traditional infantry missions, especially under the control of a tactical commander, is not the best way to employ light forces. This section shows how light forces are not suited for those traditional infantry missions and the tactical commander is not the appropriate level to either employ light forces or appreciate their impact on the battlefield. The commander who can best employ light forces is the theater commander and possibly his immediate subordinates. In NATO's central region that is the CINCENT and his Army Group commanders.

Light infantry divisions were manned and equipped to fight in low intensity conflicts on a nonlinear battlefield. Their soldiers are trained to fight decentralized, tactically offensive actions such as raids and ambushes. The impact of the light division on the battlefield is measured not by the raw combat power it employs, but by the "accumulated effects of the synchronized small unit actions."¹ Lacking armored protection, light forces are extremely vulnerable to enemy artillery. They survive on the battlefield by operating in a dispersed, low profile manner that minimizes their ability to be targeted and destroyed.² Missions given to the light forces will have to take these inherent characteristics into account.

One of the suggested missions is for the corps commander to assign the light division a sector held previously by a regular force so that regular force could be held in reserve or used elsewhere. This economy of force role requires careful thought by the the corps planning staff and will probably not yield the results expected of it. This is because the terrain requirements and tactics of the two forces are incompatible and their employment will lead to different tactical results.

Regular, mechanized and armored forces rely on their armor and mobility to survive. They orient on enemy fighting systems such as tanks and APCs. They seek to attrite enemy forces at long ranges with their numerous antitank systems and destroy them with rapidly maneuvering armored forces against enemy flanks and rears. They must operate in trafficable areas, preferably with a good road network, and they look for positions which give them long range observation over cleared engagement areas. Most often those positions are located on the front slopes of terrain features.

Any obstacles the regular force employs are designed to canalize enemy fighting systems into these engagement areas and hold them there to be destroyed. Roads and trails may have a few obstacles placed on them, and only where absolutely necessary, because future friendly operations may require the use of those trails as well.

Light infantry operates in rugged, compartmented terrain using decentralized, low profile tactics in order to gain relative mobility over the enemy, to avoid detection and to survive.³ It orients on destroying those assets found in combat support, service support and command and control systems to disrupt and dislocate enemy forces. It

engages the enemy at very short distances through ambushes and raids in close terrain where the enemy cannot use either its mobility or firepower to advantage. Most often that would occur on the rear slope of terrain features.

Obstacles put in by light infantry are designed to slow down and disrupt enemy vehicular movements. They force the vehicles into ambush zones where their slower speed in close terrain make them more vulnerable. Roads and trails would be heavily obstructed because light forces do not have to rely on them as much as the mechanized enemy.

To illustrate the different views of terrain requirements between light and heavy force commanders, consider their plans for a small village within their respective defensive sectors. The regular force commander would prefer to leave the village alone. Should he have to take his force through it he needs the streets clear to move his vehicles. The light force commander would want the village rubble. This makes it more difficult for the enemy to go through it and the rubble effect makes it more defensible for his footmobile soldiers.

The different terrain requirements illustrated above make it extremely difficult for a planning staff to merely swap a light force for a heavy force in a given defensive sector. It appears obvious that substituting a light brigade will not free up a heavy brigade to be used elsewhere.

Tactical success will be measured differently as well. A regular force commander could consider his unit successful if he destroyed enough of the enemy force to have stalled his attack. The light unit commander could consider his unit successful if he so disrupted the enemy's momentum that the enemy attack lost cohesion. To the tactical

planning staff that expected burning enemy tanks across the entire corps sector, the second is an entirely different tactical result.

The second doctrinal mission is to assign augmented light infantry forces a strongpoint defense on a key terrain feature. This mission may be assigned to the light forces because the dismounted force of a Bradley unit is much smaller than a similar light unit. There are problems, however. One is that it is unwise to use a force which has been intensively trained and indoctrinated for decentralized, offensive tactics to defend terrain. Being bound to a particular terrain feature makes light infantry easier to detect and allows the enemy to focus his artillery on them. The light infantry battalion is extremely limited in antitank systems. With the exception of its 4 TOW systems the light infantry battalion lacks the direct fire capability to hurt enemy tanks beyond 1,000 meters.⁴ If he can, or desires to, the enemy merely has to bypass the strongpoint at that range to be out of the direct fire influence of the defending force.

The third mission is that of rear area operations. The corps staff assigns the light division the mission of reacting to threats in the corps rear area and provides it the requisite assets to help it accomplish the mission. A quick look at the threat possibilities show that the light force is not the best asset employed in this important area. The threat can range from numerous groups of small Spetznaz sabotage teams, to airborne and air assault regiments descending into the corps rear area. The German police are probably better employed to find and root out the Spetznaz teams. The Soviet air assault and airborne units have the armored vehicles, and therefore the mobility and firepower, that the light infantry force lacks, making that level

of threat difficult to defeat. To provide the light division with the necessary transportation assets (the division can lift one battalion with its organic assets)⁵ means the corps has to divert limited ground and air assets from the main battle area.

The other problems involving light divisions under the control of tactical commanders deal with command and control issues. These problems exist with the units involved and the controlling headquarters as well. Employing a light division under a tactical headquarters such as a corps in Europe forces the planning staff to integrate the actions of its heavy and light forces. Their tactics are as different as night and day--and night is literally when they fight. Light forces take advantage of limited visibility situations such as night time to move and fight. The regular forces, especially the older M60/113 units, fight most effectively during daylight.

We have already discussed how the characteristics of their tactics dictate their different appreciation for the use of terrain. Those tactical characteristics also dictate that their terminology, view of the battlefield, and resources will be different, and that is a gulf that our units must yet train to overcome. Heavy-light exercises have demonstrated a need for these disparate units to train together to overcome these problems.

The difference in terminology is amazing considering light infantry is a relatively new organization in our army. The regular force soldier may be confused by such "light" terms as seamless web and elastic defense but that can be corrected through military schooling. A harder problem to solve is the different view of the battlefield and its effect on intelligence requirements and decision cycles.

Light infantry units are naturally concerned about other footmobile forces and avenues of approach into their area. Their concept of intelligence preparation of the battlefield (IPB) and deep operations may be limited to a few kilometers to their front because that is as far as they would travel within 12-24 hours on foot, and they lack the assets that can look very deep. Regular mechanized forces, on the other hand, may be more concerned with enemy mechanized forces and their avenues of approach, and show less concern for small footmobile approaches. Their concept of deep operations and IPB will extend far deeper than the light unit's because the enemy they orient on has the capability to travel greater distances in that same 12-24 hours.

Another factor to consider is the different mobility rates of these units and their effect on decision cycles. At a walking pace it is more difficult for the light unit to relocate its forces once they are committed than it is for the heavy force. These are obvious coordination problems if the heavy and light force find themselves working with each other.⁶

Units train well on those missions they expect to conduct. They also train well with those assets that are readily available. Most regular units practice for a NATO scenario and light units train on decentralized, small unit tactics. They, therefore, have little opportunity to cross train. Since light and regular divisions are not located on the same posts they have limited opportunities to train together.

The other problem area mentioned was with the tactical controlling headquarters itself. The limitations the tactical commander works with are: a relatively small lead time for planning purposes, a

close, and, therefore, narrower view of the battle than at the operational level; and a limitation in both resources and the time to await the results of his light force operations.

The biggest problem is that the tactical commander simply doesn't have the time needed to employ properly the light division. FM 71-100 has described light infantry division operations as decentralized, small unit offensive actions whose effect on the battlefield is measured by the accumulated effect of those coordinated actions. It takes a lot of time to plan and execute those actions.

Another example of a corps staff planning the use of light and regular forces in a complementary manner is to use the light forces to infiltrate the enemy's defensive sector to disrupt and degrade his defenses and make them more vulnerable to the heavy force's conventional attack. This use of light forces is one recommended by the classic light infantry school of thought.⁷ Corps, doctrinally, look 72-96 hours ahead when planning. In that time period they have to determine where the enemy is going to be, how they want to attack him and what the end state of that action will be. Assume for simplicity's sake that the corps staff is able to determine that it wants its heavy force to conduct a dawn attack 96 hours from now. Since the light force goes in earlier and it operates best at night it must begin its infiltration in small groups at least the night before. But if it starts its operation the night before it will not have the opportunity to have any disrupting effect on the enemy before the heavy force attacks less than 12 hours later. Since they are operating on foot and penetrating enemy lines they will not have gone far before daylight forces them to hold in hide positions. To give

the light force an opportunity to disrupt the enemy they will need a minimum of two nights--one to infiltrate and the other to conduct their attacks. That means the light force begins its infiltration at least 36 hours before the dawn attack, which leaves 60 hours from the inception of the idea with the corps staff to its execution. Following the one third--two thirds rule, The corps staff would use 20 hours to plan the two division attack, leaving 40 hours to the divisions to plan, coordinate, allocate resources and move into position. This is an exceptionally tight decision cycle for all unit staffs to function in.

All this supposes that the light division is already properly emplaced to begin its infiltration, and that is not likely. Any time required to move the light force's units to their myriad infiltration assembly areas will use up part of the 40 hours left to the divisions for their planning time. A corps staff wanting to avoid tipping off the upcoming attack would want to move the light units forward under the cover of darkness. That means moving light forces up three nights, or about 60 hours, before the dawn attack. So even if the corps commander and staff were prescient enough to know what they wanted to do 96 hours out, it only leaves 36 hours for all echelons to conduct their planning and, at least, execute the movement phase of the light force.

Recent exercises show that corps staffs have difficulty planning more than 72 hours ahead and decisions were often being sent to divisions with less than 24 hours to execution time. And these courses of action were branches of existing war plans with which all staffs were intimately familiar. Additionally, the units were habitually associated and used to working with each other.

The time factor does not improve when the tactical headquarters assigns a defensive mission for its light forces. To make up for their vulnerability to enemy artillery, the light division's player cell briefed us that they would need 72 hours, and preferably 96 hours to prepare their defenses properly. Essentially, the corps planning headquarters doesn't have the necessary time to employ the light division's assets in a manner which complements the actions of their heavy forces.

The other limitations to the complementary use of light forces by a tactical planning staff are the limited assets, and the narrower perspective of the tactical commander than the operational commander. The concept of limited assets is easily understood and need not be elaborated here. Put simply, the operational commander has the capability to reallocate a greater diversity and quantity of transportation and logistical assets. That capability exists even in Europe where many of these assets are initially under national control. Any support assets the corps staff need to divert to augment the light force are unavailable for use by other forces within the corps.

The corps commander's perspective as a limitation is based on the smaller parameters of his world. He has less space to operate in than the theater commander, and the life cycle of his engagements is much faster, lasting at most several days. He needs fast, quantifiable results to determine if his plan is working. It is quicker to judge success from destroyed enemy forces than the relative degradation of the enemy's momentum. The theater commander's scope of battle is larger in both time and distance, allowing him to better absorb the enemy's attack and giving him time to appreciate a disruption in the enemy's plan of attack.

This section discussed the pitfalls that can occur when the tactical commander attempts to employ his light forces. Light infantry units are so different from regular forces that their terrain requirements and tactics are no longer compatible. The tactical commander does not have the time to plan for the complementary execution of these two separate arms. He lacks the assets to move the light division while he is simultaneously supporting the operations of his regular forces. He also lacks the perspective needed to plan missions for his light and regular forces which are independent of each other, yet whose impact on the enemy is focused at the critical place and time.

The next two sections will deal with two operational commanders who were successful at employing their varied light and regular forces in a complementary manner. This allowed the Duke of Wellington and Field Marshal Sir William Slim to defeat numerically superior forces in remote theaters of war with armies which had previously known only defeat.

SECTION V--WELLINGTON'S OPERATIONAL USE OF LIGHT INFANTRY

Those watching the pitifully small force unloading from British naval vessels at the mouth of the Tagus River in 1809, would never have believed they were observing the beginnings of a campaign that would oust the French from the Iberian Peninsula, and would contribute to Napoleon's abdication five years later. The Duke of Wellington, the young commander of this 40,000 man force, was establishing his base of operations, and setting in motion a campaign plan to achieve the strategic ends he himself had recommended to England's war minister, Lord Castlereagh, a few years earlier.¹ As he did so, he was aware of the severe strategic and operational constraints under which he had to work.

Napoleon's French armies had long dominated the European continent. The only nation to avoid defeat was England, and the English Channel and British Navy, not the British Army, prevented its invasion. England had a powerful navy, but that had little direct impact on France which was Europe's dominant land power. It was Wellington's recommendation to use the Navy to transport England's small army to the periphery of Napoleon's conquered territories and help maintain a presence that would sustain the spark of resistance on the Continent. He saw an opportunity on the Iberian Peninsula where the Spanish and Portuguese populations were rebelling against French rule. He chose Portugal to establish his base of operations

Wellington was aware that his 40,000 man force constituted the bulk of England's small Army and that any battle that resulted in heavy losses, even though victorious, could result in the downfall of Prime

Minister Portland's government.² His small force would have to be supplied and funded through a long line of communications by a parsimonious Parliament which was divided over this military action. His enemy, which had yet to lose a major campaign in almost a decade, greatly outnumbered him. He could expect little at first from the Portuguese who had a small, untrained army. More importantly, England had already tried a similar operation in Spain, under Sir John Moore, and had been chased out. Moore believed that the frontier of Portugal was not defensible against a superior force. "It is an open frontier, all equally rugged, but all equally to be penetrated. If the French succeed in Spain it will be vain to attempt to resist them in Portugal."³ Wellington thought otherwise, telling Lord Castlereagh, "I have always been of the opinion that Portugal might be defended whatever might be the result of the contest in Spain."⁴ He felt that, because of the rebellion and guerilla war, the French would need over 100,000 men to subdue Portugal, but would be unable to concentrate that many troops because of commitments throughout Spain and the need to maintain forces to contain Austria's recent mobilization.

Wellington would succeed, where Sir Moore failed, because of the way he trained and integrated his light (irregular) and line (regular) military forces to complement each other at the tactical and operational levels. To understand how divergent this was from established military practice, a quick review of the period's military doctrine is needed.

Light forces had already been reintroduced to the conventional battlefield by the French several decades earlier, and had been copied by the other continental powers. The light units, as irregular skirmishers, complemented the regular line units at the tactical

level. The French had introduced them as clouds of skirmishers that would screen the movements of the battle lines as they marched from column to line formations. While masking their own units the skirmishers would rake the densely packed enemy lines with galling fire while offering a negligible target themselves. Often that frustrating effect on the enemy troops was enough to break them. If not, when the enemy units attempted to maneuver to take the skirmishers under fire they would find themselves vulnerable to the regular forces which had moved into position and were waiting for just such a moment. Should the enemy attempt to march away from the regular units facing them they would suffer the fires of the skirmishers who had moved to their flanks under the cover of their regular compatriots.⁵

Wellington integrated the actions of his light and regular forces at the tactical level but it was clear from the beginning that he had operational designs for his light forces as well. His campaign, as outlined to his minister of war, involved funding and training a Portuguese regular army of about 30,000 troops, together with a Portuguese militia of 40,000 trained as light infantry similar to his own light infantry units, all under British command, and buttressed by a British force of at least 30,000 troops.⁶ His complementary use of these different forces is exceptionally clear in his 1810 defensive campaign against Massena's invading army. As he explained in a letter to his brother:

"Notwithstanding that they have so large a force...it is not sufficient for their object, which will become every day more difficult....The country is made a desert and behind

almost every ...wall the French will meet an enemy. To this add that they have the British and Portuguese armies in their front, ready to take advantage of any fault or weakness"

Marshal Massena had invaded Portugal in 1810 at the command of Napoleon to remove the British presence from the Iberian Peninsula once and for all. Nominally commanding a force of over 325,000 men he found that three-fourths of them were committed to containing the effects of Spanish insurgents and regular forces.⁸ Because of the long distances involved he was to support his forces through foraging. Knowing this, the Portuguese government ordered crops destroyed and livestock removed from his path. Massena was forced to send his foraging parties farther out, making them more vulnerable to the Portuguese irregular forces that were stalking the French in a coordinated effort directed by Wellington. Additionally, both Portuguese and British light forces were used to screen Wellington's regular forces from French reconnaissance efforts while providing Wellington with valuable intelligence.

Wellington's campaign plan capitalized on the Massena's logistical vulnerability while minimizing his own weaknesses. His light forces were to delay and harry the French to buy Wellington the time he needed to both build up the fortifications that would protect his base of operations near Lisbon and train the Portuguese regular line units he was raising. Until the Portuguese line units were ready he had to rely on his British regulars, but he could not risk them in chance battles. He, therefore, fought his battles on ground of his choosing, using his light forces to confuse the French as to his actual whereabouts and dispositions until it was too late for Massena to

react. For example, Wellington used his own Light Division under General Craufurd to delay Massena while he established his defensive positions on the ridge at Bussaco. Meanwhile, Portuguese light units were harrying French supply columns and stragglers to the point that D'Erlon's IX Corps was diverted to counter those attacks. When Massena arrived at Bussaco, he was so frustrated and confused he ordered a frontal attack based on an inadequate reconnaissance and was severely mauled for his efforts.⁹

By the time Massena neared Lisbon, Wellington had had time enough to build his formidable lines at Torres Vedras, a series of fortifications that were now manned by British and the recently trained Portuguese regulars. Too weak to overcome Wellington's defenses, Massena settled down to wait for an opportunity to attack. After several months of waiting and starving, Massena's army began a retreat back to Spain. Followed at a safe distance by Wellington's regular forces, Massena was subjected once more to the harrying tactics of the light forces. For example, on 20 November, a relief force from the French occupied town of Ciudad Rodrigo, set out to bring food to Massena's forces. It was forced to return because of the constant attacks from Portuguese light units. D'Erlon's IX Corps linked up with Massena's army but it has been greatly weakened from having to post detachments along the French lines of communication and could really offer no more than extra mouths that had to be fed.¹⁰

Wellington's defense of Portugal against Massena's numerically superior French army was successful because Wellington had a campaign plan that integrated the strengths of his disparate forces in a manner that was operationally significant. Actions that Massena took to

counter the attacks of the irregular forces simply made him more vulnerable to Wellington's regular forces. While numerically inferior, the allied regular forces were just strong enough to prevent Massena from accomplishing his campaign goal--seizing the British base of operations and ejecting them from Portugal. Wellington would continue to blend the effects of his forces together, at the tactical and operational level, to slowly push the French out of Spain in 1813, then, finally, destroy them in southern France the next year.¹¹

One hundred and thirty years later, on the other side of the world, another British general would find himself in a position similar to Wellington's. Forced to accomplish great deeds at the end of a long, thin logistical pipeline in a secondary theater of operations, Field Marshal Sir William Slim would also have to blend the characteristics of disparate and scarce military forces in a campaign against an unbeaten foe which had just conquered an empire.

SECTION VI--OPERATIONAL USE OF LIGHT AND HEAVY FORCES IN BURMA

In his book, Defeat into Victory, Field Marshal Sir William Slim, recounts that one of the tools he used when assuming command was to roughly sketch a diagram of his new area of operations with the distances and key geographical features added. This rough picture allowed him to gain a better perspective of the logistical and operational dimensions of his command.¹ When he took command of the 14th Army in the new Burma theater in October 1943 those dimensions certainly appeared overwhelming. This section will cover Slim's operational level view of his area of operations, and his analysis of the enemy he faced in Burma. It will focus on the early part of his offensive campaign plan of 1944-45 to show how he planned the complementary use of his light and regular forces to defeat the Japanese forces.

Geographically, his theater of operations stretched over 700 miles from the foothills of the Himalayas in the north through the rugged, uncharted jungled mountain ranges in the center to the steamy salt marshes that bordered the Bay of Bengal in the south. There were few roads or railways in the area, and none of them had been built with military operations in mind. It was not possible to use one single form of ground transportation to bring his logistics from India to his front line units. Supplies would first be carried part way by rail, then carried across rivers by barge, then, finally, delivered by truck or pack animal the remaining distance.

The theater itself was divided into three fronts. On the west coast was the Arakan or southern front--the gateway to Calcutta. To the east was the Central Front--the last barrier between the invading Japanese forces and Assam, a vital logistics and communications center. To lose that would jeopardize British rule in India. The easternmost front was called by the British the Northern Front, and by the Americans the Northern Combat Area Command. There was located the greatest concentration of American forces. This front was General Stilwell's area of responsibility, where he was in charge of the Chinese forces fighting nominally under the control of General Slim.²

As the theater commander, Slim had to balance his strategic goals with his means. Compounding his problem were the differing interpretations the United States and England gave to the strategic value of this theater. To the Americans and Chinese, the only reason to fight the Japanese in Burma was to reopen ground communications with China and thereby keep them involved in the war. They were content with a campaign that would merely push the Japanese back far enough that they could build a road from Ledo to China.

The British, on the other hand, wanted to remove Japanese influence and regain lost colonial territory. To accomplish that they had to destroy Japanese forces in the area and recapture Rangoon.³

The Japanese soldier was a formidable foe for Slim's troops. Lightly equipped and familiar with the jungle, the Japanese soldiers could move faster through the jungle than the more heavily equipped British forces could on the jungle roads. The Japanese fought as classic light infantry, avoiding costly frontal attacks to seek the flanks and rear of the retreating road bound columns. Their favorite

tactic was to harass a retreating British unit while slipping a small force through the jungle to set up a roadblock on the road behind the British. Forced to fight in two directions and cut off from their resupply, the surrounded unit would be forced to break up and fall back, leaving much of its equipment behind.⁴

The Japanese had yet to suffer a major defeat in this theater, but Slim and staff soon realized that in the Japanese style of fighting lay a weakness that could be exploited. Japanese forces attacked so boldly and confidently that their plans left only a small logistical margin of safety. Like Wellington's French enemy, the Japanese relied on foraging and capturing enemy logistics to make up for their own shortfall. If Slim could hold the Japanese forces back from his logistic centers, while preventing them from receiving their supplies, by counterattacking he would then be able to destroy the weakened Japanese.⁵ Slim's offensive of 1944-45 would take advantage of this Japanese vulnerability.

General Giffard, the land component commander for Southeast Asia Command (SEAC) and Slim's superior, gave clear guidance for Slim's upcoming campaign. On the Southern Front he was to seize forward operating bases and exploit southward. On the Central Front he was to move to the Chindwin River southeast of Imphal, near Sittaung and Juwa, and exploit across the Chindwin, if the opportunity presented itself. On the Northern Front he was to use the Chindits, a highly trained light infantry force, in coordination with General Stilwell's offensive to reopen land communications with China.⁶

For Slim, "The surest way of quick success in Burma is, not to hammer our way with small forces through jungle where the Japanese have every advantage, but to make him occupy as much area as possible, string himself out until he is weak, and then, when we have got him stretched, come in at him from sea and air."⁷ To do that, however, he had to do more than simply delay, defend or even advance. He had to wrest the initiative away from the Japanese. He began by instilling confidence in his units by aggressively patrolling to provide intelligence and deny to the enemy intelligence, which established a pattern of success. In this manner, he began taking the initiative away from the Japanese.⁸ As the training level in his army's regular forces progressed, he turned to the development of his campaign plan. Key to his concept of the campaign would be the complementary use of his regular infantry divisions with a two division-sized light infantry force, Wingate's Chindits.

Major General Orde C. Wingate, a specialist in the art of irregular warfare, had conceived the idea of lightly equipped infantry columns penetrating deep into the enemy's rear areas to degrade his combat power by attacking his rear infrastructure while the main forces attacked decisively elsewhere. The key to the whole concept was that both light and regular forces had to hit the enemy at the same time to complement each other. It was a lesson learned the hard way during the first Chindit operation the year before. That also had been planned as a regular-light combined action but when the regular forces had proven unprepared to conduct their offensive Sir Archibald Wavell had ordered the Chindits in to "test this form of warfare". The Chindits succeeded in penetrating deep into Japanese territory and

interdicting their lines of communication. However, since the Japanese weren't tied down at the front fighting the main forces they were able to divert manpower to search for the light infantry force. Three thousand men had survived up to 10 weeks operating up to a depth of 200 miles behind enemy lines, but with a loss of almost one third of the force it had been a moral victory only.⁹

This time Wingate's force would be larger to have a greater effect on the enemy, and its operation would be timed to coincide with Slim's main force offensive. Wingate's dedicated air force would resupply him so that he could remain behind enemy lines for a longer period. Slim's instructions to Wingate were to penetrate into Japanese held Burma by infiltration and air to:

- "1) help the advance of Stilwell's Ledo force by cutting the lines of communication to the Japanese 18th division, harassing its rear and preventing reinforcement.
- 2) Create a favorable situation for the Yunnan Chinese forces to cross the Salvan river and enter Burma
- 3) Inflict the greatest possible damage and confusion on the enemy in North Burma."¹⁰

Wingate sent two of his six regiments into Burma in early March to be in position when Slim's regular forces began their planned offensive. One regiment, the 16th, had already infiltrated by foot from Ledo the month prior. These three regiments were to establish base camps, and from them conduct attacks against Japanese lines of communications and rear garrisons to divert Japanese reserves from the front. After 90 days, the committed regiments were to be replaced by the other three regiments. The 1st Chindit operation had shown that 90 days had been the limit of endurance for these forces.¹¹ Eleven days after their operation began, Wingate's forces had cut the main road and rail link

to the Japanese units fighting Stilwell. A 6,000 man force from the arriving Japanese 53rd Division had to be diverted to hunt down the light force. Actions by one Chindit brigade delayed by several months the employment of several battalions belonging to the Japanese 15th Division which had been on their way to take part in the Japanese offensive in the Central Front.¹² By May, the Chindit operation had ceased to have an operational effect in the theater. One brigade was flown out in early May, the remainder came under the tactical control of General Stilwell who employed them as regular infantry.¹³

A comment on Slim's employment of this light force from his perspective as the operational commander is in order at this point. He had wanted to weaken the Japanese forces facing his regular units before he attacked across the Irrawaddy River into Burma. Wingate's light infantry force would help weaken the Japanese front units in two ways. First, cutting the enemy's lines of communications would quickly aggravate an already risky logistical situation for enemy front line units. Second, to neutralize these light forces in their rear areas the Japanese would have to divert forces which otherwise would have reinforced their frontline units.

The force he employed in this role was light by the European definition of the term in that its mission, not its equipment, determined its role. After all, half of the Chindit force was comprised of the British 70th Division, a regular unit which had received extra training in jungle operations. Some of the equipment used in the base camps included artillery pieces common to the main forces.¹⁴

It required an enormous amount of time and operational assets to properly train and support employment of this force. As an operational commander, Slim could afford both. He had the lead time because it required several months to build up the logistics and forces for his planned offensives. Within the scope of his theater there were enough air assets available to dedicate to Wingate his own small air force, which could then concentrate solely on the difficult task of supplying the base camps deep in the enemy's rear.

Above all else, it required the detached, broad view of the battlefield that only the operational area commander enjoys to truly appreciate the employment of such a force. His broad perspective of the area of operations allowed him to determine when and where he could phase in the light force to best complement his main forces. It made him understand how dependent the light force was on air resupply and caused him to dedicate air assets to Wingate over the objections of his staff.

It didn't mean he would employ the light force optimally. Although directed to employ the Chindits to support Stilwell's offensive, he had the option of using them to complement his offensive on the Central Front as Wingate had recommended. He later regretted not doing so, as it turned out that the Battle of Imphal in the Central Front would be decisive.¹⁵ Employing the Chindits there would have had a greater complementary effect on the theater since cutting the lines of communications in that area would have crippled the major Japanese supply routes in theater.¹⁶

SECTION VII--ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSION

Probably the greatest advantage the operational commander has over the tactical commander is the capability to appreciate the cumulative effects of light infantry actions on the enemy. Two reasons are the time scale and the perspective in which he operates. Campaigns obviously take more time to conduct than tactical actions. I have already alluded to the longer planning time involved. The actual operation itself is usually longer with its concomitant effect on the enemy. If the light force's actions take several days or weeks to have an impact on the enemy they can still be a valuable contribution to a campaign that itself lasts several weeks or months. One example is the light infantry penchant for night operations. Night actions reduce the enemy's sleep and maintenance periods, especially, if they are conducted in conjunction with main force daylight actions. Over time, the lack of maintenance effort will degrade the enemy's fighting ability. Also, should the enemy react to night attacks in his rear area by consolidating his units and equipment to protect his rear, he creates a more lucrative target for the operational commander's artillery and air assets.¹ Again the key here is that it takes time for this to happen, time that only the operational commander can afford.

The other reason I mentioned is the perspective his position gives the operational commander. To illustrate this point I will use two of the doctrinal missions recommended for light forces in Europe and how their use would enhance the operational commander's effort. It is

important to keep in mind that the light forces are conducting offensive actions even if the overall operational mission is defensive.

The first example is the occupation of an urban area. The theater commander has determined that one of the objectives of an invading force is a particular urban area that may not be tactically valuable. It could be operationally valuable as a transportation hub, a command and control center, or its possession could have political value. A light infantry force occupying that urban area could have an operational impact. The tactical commander might point out that the light force there is wasted because it could simply be bypassed and isolated, to be taken out later. Should the invading force decide to contest the area they would sooner or later be able to defeat the light force through sheer combat power. The operational commander would point out that should the invading force decide to bypass the urban area the light force has already accomplished the mission of preventing the enemy from seizing it. The light force further assists the operational commander by using the urban area as a base of operations, infiltrating at night through the surrounding forces to attack such targets such as logistics assets and command nodes. More enemy combat forces would have to be diverted in an effort to contain the raids. Whenever the enemy chooses to contest the urban area, either to punish the light forces or else occupy that area, they will be faced with the dilemma of destroying the very infrastructure they wanted to use.²

The other example is the use of light infantry to operate in a sector of restrictive terrain. A light division could be employed to conduct operations in this sector while regular forces defend the more traditional mechanized avenues of approach. The light infantry could engage those enemy forces traveling through the difficult terrain in an attempt to bypass the regular forces. The light force would probably not be able to defeat the enemy force passing through its sector, but it certainly would attrite and delay that force. The corps commander may not appreciate those effects as that part of his sector will probably have been penetrated. The theater commander could appreciate the effect, however, because the cumulative value of all those small tactical actions could require the enemy to deviate from his original plan, with operational level effects.

Delaying the force coming through the difficult terrain would upset carefully planned time schedules. This factor would be enhanced if the employment of the light division were a surprise to the enemy. Because of its relatively low battlefield signature attaining surprise is easier with the light force than with a heavy force. When the unsuspecting enemy finds out he is engaged with dismounted infantry he would face a dilemma. He could divert his forces back toward the mechanized avenues of approach or continue to bull through. To divert them would be a change in his plan, plus he would face the defending regular force. If he were to bull through he might initially suffer fewer casualties, but would have to contend with having to divert combat assets to protect his lines of communication.³ Adding to the difficulty is the different set of tactics required to root out dismounted infantry using hit and run tactics in rugged terrain. As

Afghanistan and Vietnam have shown, heavy troops who are trained in mechanized warfare do not always do very well against light forces in that situation.

Changing plans in midstride, reacting to upset time schedules, and diverting scarce resources to protect rear areas are all effects properly employed light forces can have on the enemy. These effects force the enemy to modify his original plan in ways he had not anticipated. Unexpected modifications, especially at critical junctures in his plan, force him to stumble in the execution of his operation making him more vulnerable to our main forces. That can be appreciated at the operational level.

The previous sections discussed how the US doctrinal view and the classic European view of light infantry differ and how their concepts for employment differ as well. These sections have shown that in their appreciation of terrain, training and method of employment light forces are different from heavy forces. It makes sense for a commander to apply his fighting units in a manner that minimizes their weaknesses while capitalizing on their strengths. Since light and heavy forces are different they can contribute more to the success of a mission if they are employed independently of each other where their combat effects, rather than their tactical forces, are integrated by the controlling headquarters.

The section on the pitfalls of employing light forces according to US doctrine clearly illustrated that the tactical commander doesn't have the capability to employ these disparate forces in a complementary manner. The tactical commander and his staff lack the assets to employ the light force properly without degrading his main

forces. They also lack the broad perspective of the battle to be able to determine when and where to employ their light and main forces independently, yet focus their effects on the enemy.

Insufficient lead time is another reason the tactical commander would have difficulty employing his light force where it could best complement his main forces. The example of a corps commander trying to use a light division to enhance his main force attack was used to underscore that limitation. Both Wellington and Slim had months to train their forces and plan for their use. An operational commander today has the greater flexibility to plan the phasing of his light units into his troop deployment schedule and, therefore, plan for their employment better than the tactical commander who must use what troops he has available at that time.

For these reasons, if the light infantry division is to be used as a tool to complement our main forces, it is a tool best wielded by the operational commander.

ENDNOTES

SECTION I

1. William B. Caldwell, Major, "Not Light Enough To Get There, Not Heavy Enough To Win: The Case Of US Light Infantry", (Monograph, School of Advanced Military Studies (hereafter referred to as SAMS), US Army Command & General Staff College, 4 December 1987, pp. 14-15.
2. Scott R. McMichael, Major, "Discussions On Training And Employing Light Infantry", Combat Studies Institute, Survey # 8, (US Army Command and General Staff College), p. 21.
3. Department of the Army, Field Manual (FM) 71-100 (draft), Division Operations, (US Army Command and General Staff College, Dec 1987), p. iii. This edition provides the doctrine for both heavy and light divisions, whereas the 1978 version, Armored and Mechanized Divisions, dealt exclusively with heavy divisions. The new manual compares the difference between the two by stating, "close combat forces at the division level are divided into two categories; heavy and light... Heavy forces are characterized by mobile, ground and air mounted armor protected weapons systems... Light forces are characterized by lighter, predominantly handheld, small arms and crew served weapons."
4. Ibid. Both offensive and defensive missions discussed in later chapters make no distinction as to whether the heavy or light division is responsible for their execution.
5. William S. Lind, Maneuver Warfare Handbook, (Boulder, Colo: Praeger, 1985), p. 20.

SECTION II

1. John English, "Thinking About Light Infantry", Infantry, Nov-Dec 1984, p. 19.
2. Ibid, p. 19.
3. Ibid, p. 20.
4. John Keegan, Mask Of Command, (NY: Viking, 1987), p. 126.
5. Scott R. McMichael, Major, "Discussions On Training And Employing Light Infantry", p. 21.
6. John English, A Perspective On Infantry, (NY: Praeger, 1984), p. 209.
7. Edward Luttwak, "Strategic Utility Of US Light Divisions: A Systematic Evaluation", contract # DABT 60-84-C-0099, 1 August 1985, p. 1. Hereafter referred to as Luttwak.
8. John English, "Thinking about Light Infantry", p. 24.

9. John English, A Perspective On Infantry, p. 289.

SECTION III

1. Department of the Army, "White Paper: Light Infantry Divisions", (Wash D.C: 16 April 1984), p. 1.
2. Ibid, p. 1.
3. Ibid, p. 1.
4. Ibid, p. 2.
5. William Caldwell, "Not Light Enough To Get There, Not Heavy Enough To Fight", p. 7.
6. FM 71-100 (draft), Division Operations, p. iii.
7. Ibid, p. 1-5.
8. Ibid, p. 4-22. In his paper, Col Wass de Czege recommends this as the primary mission for light divisions.
9. Edward E. E. Thurman, Major, "The Light Infantry Division, An Operational Force", SAMS monograph, US Army Command and General Staff College, June 1985, p. 10.
10. David M. Petraeus, Major, "Light Infantry In Europe: Strategic flexibility, and Conventional Deterrence", Military Review, Dec 1984, pp. 45-46. Hereafter referred to as Petraeus.
11. Thurman, "The Light Infantry Division, An Operational Force", p. 11. Thurman develops this theme predominantly based on an analysis of MG Crowell and LTC Bates' article, "Heavy- Light connection: Division". This source is cited in the bibliography.
12. David Gates, "Western Light Forces And Defense Planning, 3: The US Light Divisions", Centrepiece 10, (Aberdeen, Scotland: Centre for Defense Studies, Autumn, 1986), p.2.

SECTION IV

1. FM 71-100 (draft), Division Operations, p. 1-5.
2. Scott R. McMichael, "A Historical Perspective On Light Infantry", p. iii.
3. FM 71-100 (draft), pp. A-5 & 6.
4. Department of the Army, FM 7-72, Light Infantry Battalion, (Wash D. C: 16 March 1987), p. 1-12.

5. FM 71-100 (draft), p. A-10.

6. Michael T. Plummer, Colonel, "Celtic Cross IV After Action Report: Light-Heavy Mix", Infantry, Mar-Apr 1987, p. 32.

7. Huba Wass de Czege, Colonel, "Light Infantry, In Europe Study, Part I, General Comments On CENTAG Scenarios", White paper for General Galvin, 15 April 1987 draft, p. 5.

SECTION V

1. John Keegan, Mask Of Command, pp. 108-110.

2. David Gates, The Spanish Ulcer, (New York: W W Norton & Co, 1986), p. 175.

3. Ibid, pp. 149-150.

4. Ibid, p. 150.

5. Ibid, p. 24.

6. Ibid, p. 150.

7. Ibid, p. 230.

8. Ibid, p. 34.

9. Ibid, pp. 232-233.

10. Ibid, p. 208.

11. Keegan, p. 110.

SECTION VI

1. Sir William Slim, Field Marshal, Defeat Into Victory, (London: Cassell & Co, 1956), p. 20. Hereafter referred to as Slim.

2. Otto Heilbrunn, Warfare In The Enemy's Rear, (New York: Praeger, 1963), p. 78.

3. Slim, pp. 249-250.

4. Ibid, p. 33.

5. Ibid, p. 18.

6. Don T. Riley, Major, "The Evolution Of Operational Art--The Reconquest Of Burma", SAMS monograph, US Army Command and General Staff College, 20 May 1987, p. 6.

7. Ibid, p. 12.
8. Slim, p. 188.
9. Heilbrunn, pp. 79-81.
10. Slim, p. 258.
11. Scott R. McMichael, "A Historical Perspective On Light Infantry", p. 8.
12. Slim, pp. 266-267.
13. Heilbrunn, P. 90.
14. Slim, pp. 216-217.
15. Slim, p. 268.
16. Heilbrunn, pp. 85-88. Heilbrunn's opinion is that the Quebec Conference's decision to use Wingate's force to support Stilwell's efforts to reopen land communications to China was more politically than militarily inspired. It was a decision intended to placate the Americans and keep the Chinese in the war. Slim and others had already determined the main effort should have been focused in the Central Front for military reasons.

SECTION VII

1. Luttwak, p. 13.
2. Niekræus, pp. 35-53.
3. Luttwak, p. 7.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Books and Manuals

- English, John A. A Perspective On Infantry. New York: Praeger Publishers, 1981.
- Gates, David. The Spanish Ulcer: A History Of The Peninsular War. New York: WW Norton & Co. 1986.
- Heilbrunn, Otto. Warfare In the Enemy's Rear. New York: Praeger Publishers. 1963.
- Keegan, John. The Mask Of Command. New York: Viking. 1987.
- Liddell Hart, B. H. The Future Of Infantry. Harrisburg, Pa: Military Service Publishing Company, 1936.
- Lind, William S. Maneuver Warfare Handbook. Boulder, Colo: Praeger Publishers, 1985.
- Slim, Sir William. Defeat Into Victory. London: Cassell & Company LTD, 1956.
- Field Circular 71-101, Light Infantry Division Operations. Fort Leavenworth, KS: US Army command and General Staff College. 1984.
- US Department of the Army Field Circular 7-13, Light Infantry Battalion and Brigade Operations. Ft Benning: USAIG, 1985.
- US Department of Defense. Light Infantry Divisions (White Paper). Department of the Army. 1984.
- Field Manual 7-72, Light Infantry Battalion. Washington DC: HQ Department of the Army, 1987.
- Field Manual (Draft) 71-100, Division Operations. Fort Leavenworth, KS: US Command and General Staff College. 1987.
- Field Manual 100-5, Operations. Washington D. C.: HQ Department of the Army. 1986.

Articles and Periodicals

- Canby, Steven L. "Light Infantry In Perspective". Infantry. July-Aug 84, pp. 28-31.
- Crowell, Major General Howard G. and LTC Jared L. Bates. "Heavy-Light Connection: Division". Infantry. July-August 1984. pp. 13-18.
- Depuy, Gen William E. "The Light Infantry: Indispensable Element Of A Balanced Force". Army. Jun 85, pp. 26-41.
- Downing, Brigadier General Wayne A. "Light Infantry Integration In

- Central Europe". Military Review. September 1986, pp. 18-30.
- English, John. "Thinking About Light Infantry". Infantry. November-December 1984. pp. 29-25.
- Foss, Major General John W. "Light Infantry Has A Definite Place On The Battlefield". Army Times. 29 October 1984, p. 21.
- Gates, David. "Western Light Forces and Defense Planning 1. Some Parallels From The Past". Centerpiece 8. Centre for Defensive Studies. Aberdeen, Scotland. Spring 1986.
- _____, David. "Western Light Forces And Defensive Planning", Centerpiece 10. Centre for Defense Studies, Aberdeen, Scotland: Autumn, 1986.
- Hollingsworth, Lieutenant General James F. "The Light Division-Light Enough To Get There-Mobile Enough to Survive-Lethal Enough to Win-We Need It Now". Armed Forces Journal International. October 1983, pp. 84-90.
- Luttwak, Edward. Strategic Utility Of US Light Divisions, A Systematic Evaluation. Contract # DDBT60-34-C-0099, 1 August 1985.
- McMichael, Major Scott R. "Proverbs Of The Light Infantry". Military Review. September 1985. pp. 22-28.
- Narasimhan, R. "The Chindits Campaign In Burma". Military History Anthology. Combat Studies Institute. US Army Command and General Staff College, Ft. Leavenworth, Kansas. 1984.
- Oliver, Edward L. "Infantry Division (Light)", Infantry. March-April 1984, pp. 14-16.
- Petraeus, Major David M. "Light Infantry In Europe: Strategic Flexibility and Conventional Deterrence". Military Review. Dec 1984, pp. 35-55.
- Plummer, Michael T, Colonel. "Celtic IV After Action Report: Light-Heavy Mix". Infantry. Mar-Apr 1987.
- Wass de Czege, Huba, COL. "Three Kinds Of Infantry". Infantry. Jul-Aug 85. pp. 11-13.
- _____. "More On Infantry". Infantry. September-October 1986. pp. 13-15.
- Wickham, General John A. "Light Infantry Divisions In The Defense Of Europe". NATO's 16 Nations. Special Edition. 1-85. Vol 20. pp. 38-43.

Unpublished Manuscripts

- Caldwell, William. Major. Not Light Enough To Get There, Not Heavy, Enough To Win: The Case Of US Light Infantry. SAMS Monograph. US Army Command And General Staff College. 4 December 1987.
- Gardner, Major Gregory D. A Concept For The Tactical Employment Of Light Infantry In Central Europe. SAMS Monograph. US Army Command and General Staff College. 20 December 1986.
- McMichael, Scott R. Major. Discussions On Training And Employing Light Infantry. Combat Studies Institute, Survey #8. US Army Command And Staff College. Undated.
- _____, Major Scott R. A Historical Perspective On Light Infantry. Combat Studies Institute, US Army Command and General Staff College. May 1986.
- Riley, Major Don T. The Evolution Of Operational Art- The Reconquest Of Burma 1942-1945. SAMS Monograph. US Army Command and General Staff college. May 1987
- Thurman, Major Edward E. E. The Light Infantry Division, An Operational Force. SAMS Monograph. US Army Command and General Staff College. 3 June 1986.
- Wass de Czege, Colonel Huba. Light Infantry In Europe Stud., Part I: General Comments On CENTAG Scenarios. (Draft), 15 April 87.